

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RAPID IDENTIFICATION SURVEY REPORT

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Brettenham Heath bare ground plots, Brettenham, Norfolk ENF125696

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HER Information

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Contents

Summary	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Geology and topography	1
3. Archaeological and historical background	1
4. Methodology	3
5. Results	4
6. Finds	6
7. Discussion	6
8. Archive deposition	
9. Contributors and acknowledgements	

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List of Figures

1. Location map	2
2. Plot 5	5

List of Tables

1. Plot descriptions	
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List of Appendices

1. Brief and specification

Summary

An archaeological rapid identification survey was carried out over five plots on Brettenham Heath, Norfolk. This was done in order to identify any earth works which might be present prior to rotavation as part of a conservation trial.

Although they could not be identified, various linear and sub-circular mounds were recognised around plot 5, and are thought to possibly represent sand quarrying spoil heaps. Three flints of Mesolithic, Neolithic or later prehistoric date were recovered from Plots 1 and 2.

1. Introduction

An archaeological rapid identification survey (RIS) was carried out over five different plots spread on a roughly east-west alignment south of the A11 and west of High Bridgham Road, on Brettenham Heath, Norfolk. This was done in order to identify any potential earthworks, prior to the plots being rotavated as part of a moth conservation strategy. The work was carried out on 15th and 21st December, 2010 to a Brief issued by David Robertson (Historic Environment Service, Appendix 1) and to a Written Scheme of Investigation by Jo Caruth (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team).

2. Topography

The topography of the site was quite variable, ranging from 27-44m above the Ordnance Datum. Some areas of the heath were relatively flat, whilst some were rather more undulating and indicate potential natural rabbit warrens and features that formed as a result of glacial activity (Unknown author, 2010, www.naturalengland.org.uk). Areas to the south-east, such as Plot 1, were heavily sloped, running down into a dry valley.

3. Archaeological and historical background

The site is known to have been relatively undisturbed heathland in the late 18th century, whilst by the late 19th century it was being used in part for cultivation and tree planting. There are only five archaeological records associated with the heath, including a prehistoric lithic implement, post-medieval well and possible trackway/parish boundary, and various undated earthwork features (see Appendix 1). Heaths in Norfolk were often managed in a way that has allowed the survival of earthworks, such as prehistoric burial mounds or medieval warren features. The Peddars Way runs directly to the east of the heath.

